

## COBBETT'S WEEKLY POLITICAL REGISTER.

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[738]

TO LORD GRENVILLE,  
*On the Constitutions of England, America, and France.*

MY LORD—In the published report of your speech of the 24th of last month, on the subject of the war against France, we read the following passage: “As to *new constitutions*, he (Lord G.) was firmly of opinion, that a good constitution, could only be formed by the adoption of remedies, from time to time, under the circumstances which required them. The only instance of exception mentioned was that of America; but, *that did not apply*. The founders of that constitution acted with *great wisdom*. It was framed so as to produce as little change as possible in the *existing laws* and *manners* under the altered form of government, which, though a *Republic*, was constructed as nearly as the difference would admit, on the MONARCHICAL form of OUR OWN CONSTITUTION.”

This passage, my Lord, owing, I dare say, to the want of accuracy in the Reporter, is not so clear, or so correct, as one might have wished; but, its meaning evidently is, that constitutions of government cannot be well formed *all at once*; that the American constitution of government *bears a very near resemblance to our own*; and (taking in the context), that the constitution of government now adopting, or settling, in France, is a *bad constitution, or system*.

As to the first of these propositions: that a constitution cannot be well made *all at once*, it is of little consequence as to the object which I have in view; for, the French have been more than 25 years forming their constitution; and, however mortifying it may be to some people, the *laws of France*, even while the Bourbons were on the throne, last year, were, *for the far greater part*, laws passed by the different *National Assemblies*, or, as some would call them, the *Jacobins*. It is a very great mistake to suppose, that Napo-

leon, either in his *constitution* or his *code*, began *a new*. He did little more than arrange, classify, reduce to order, and provide for enforcing the laws, under whatever name, passed by the different assemblies; and *this* was the *code*, which the Bourbons promised to adhere to and support. So that the constitution of France, as it now stands, has been the work of 26 years, not only of *study*, but of *experience*. It is very curious to hear so many persons abusing, or ridiculing, the French constitution, and, in almost the same breath, saying, that it is *no more* than what the people had under Louis XVIII. This looks a little like *insincerity*.

It is, however, the alledged *resemblance* between the *English* and *American* governments which is the most interesting object of examination at present; though it will, before I conclude, be necessary to see a little what resemblance that of France bears to each of the former governments. I take your Lordship to mean, of course, that there is a very near resemblance between the English and American governments *as they really are in operation*. Not as they are to be found in books written about constitutions. What Montesquieu and De L'homme and Blackstone and Paley and a long list of grave political romance writers have published upon the subject, we will leave wholly out of the question. Your Lordship was talking, and so will I talk, of things **AS THEY ARE**, and not as they *ought to be*; or as they are, from parrot-like habit, *said to be*. And, here, my Lord, I beg leave, once for all, to state, that I am offering no *opinions* of my own upon this subject. Your Lordship, according to the published report, says, that there is a near resemblance between the English and American governments. This fact I deny; but, that is all. I do not say that the American government is *better* than ours; nor do I say, that it is *worse*. I only say, that it does *not resemble* ours. Which is the best and which is the worst I leave to the decision of the **reader**, in whatever country he may live.

But, before I enter on my proofs of the negative of this your Lordships proposition, permit that I observe, for a moment, on the desire, which is so often discovered in this country, to induce other nations to adopt governments like our own. No sooner do we hear of a change of government in any country, than we begin urging the people of such country to adopt a government like ours. The newspaper people, the *Walters* and *Perrys* and the like are everlasting telling the French, that they ought to come as *nearly as possible* to our admirable *mixed government*. Those cunning loons, the *Edinburgh Reviewers*, chant the same litinies in every succeeding number. They despair of the French, because they reject our excellent model of government; and they predict, that the American system cannot endure long, because it has none of those bodies of *Nobles*, or *large proprietors*, who are the best *guardians* of the *peoples rights*, standing as the latter do between the people and the Prince! This was their talk, indeed, before your Lordship and other great Noblemen joined the Ministers, in support of the war. What these place-hunting critics will say now is a great deal more than I am able to guess. Thus, too, it was that *Burke* ranted and raved. The French, according to him, ought to have been half put to death, because they despised the "admirable" mixed government of England. How he ran on, what bombastical balderdash he published upon this subject, your Lordship knows as well as I; and you, doubtless, remember, that, when *answered* by *Paine*, instead of attempting to *reply*, he pointed out the work of his antagonist to be replied to by the *Attorney General*! Now, my Lord, what can be the *real cause* of all this anxiety to get other nations to adopt our own sort of government? It is not the usual practice of the world to be so eager to induce others to share in one's happiness. If a man, by any accident, finds a parcel of money in a field, or a wood, does he run away to bring his neighbours, or even his cousins, or brothers, to enter into a search with him? Did we ever hear of a tradesman, who had a set of good customers, endeavour to introduce persons of the same trade to them? Did ever handsome woman try to make any other woman look as handsome as herself?

even though that other were her sister; nay, her daughter? If an individual make a valuable discovery, so far is he from communicating it to the world, that he, if he can, obtains a *patent* for it, and thereby the right of punishing whoever attempts even to *imitate* his wares. What, then, can be the *cause* of our anxiety to make other nations partakers in the blessings of our government? We take special care to keep from them all we can in the way of *commerce*. We have a law for the encouragement of our own *navigation* to the discouragement of that of all other countries. We have laws to prevent the carrying to other countries *machines* to facilitate the making of *manufactures*. We have laws to prohibit the carrying of the produce of our colonies to other countries, until it has been brought here. We have laws to prevent the exportation of *live sheep* lest other countries should get our breeds. We have laws to punish *artizans* and *manufacturers*, who attempt to leave this country, and also to punish the masters of the vessels in which they are attempting to escape; the avowed object of which laws is to prevent other countries from arriving at our state of perfection in manufactures and arts. How is it, then, my Lord, that we are so generous as to our *political possessions*? Generous, did I say? Nay, obtrusive and impertinent. We are not only tendering them with both hands at once; but, we really *thrust* them upon the world; and, if any nation be so resolutely delicate as to refuse to receive them, let that nation look to itself! "Will you give me a penny?" said Dilworth's Beggar to the Priest. "No." "Will you, for the love of Christ, give me a halfpenny, then, to keep me from starving?" "No." "Will you, then, give me one farthing?" "No." "Pray, then since I must die with hunger, give me your blessing, Reverend Father." "Kneel down, my dear son, and receive it." "No," said the Beggar, "for if it were worth but one single farthing you would not give it me; so you may e'en keep your blessing to yourself." But, we greatly surpass the Priest; for while we withhold *commerce*, *navigation*, *manufactures*, *arts*, *artizans*, *manufacturers*, *breed of animals*, &c. &c. we not only offer our blessing, but we abuse those who reject it; and, there are those amongst us who scruple not to say, that,



the nation, which has the *insolence* to refuse to share in our *political happiness*, ought to feel the *force of our arms*. To what, then, shall I fairly ascribe this desire to induce other nations to adopt our *sort of government*? It is notorious, that men seek for companions in *misery* and *disgrace*. Never was there a bankrupt who did not wish to make his appearance in a copious Gazette. The coward looks bold when he has fled amongst a crowd. The country girls, who anticipate the connubial tie, always observe, and very truly, that they are *not the first* and shall *not be the last*. It is said, that persons, infected with the plague, feel a pleasure in communicating it to others. To ascribe to a motive like any of these, our desire to extend our sort of government to other nations would be shocking indeed. Yet, lest we should expose ourselves to the imputation, I think it would be best for us to be silent upon the subject; or, at least, where nations decline to adopt our system, to refrain from expressing any *resentment* against them on that account.

John Bull's may be the best government in the whole world; it may be very laudable in him, very disinterested, very humane, extraordinarily generous, to urge other nations to partake in his blessings. He may *lament* the blindness, or the obstinacy, or the perverseness, of the nations, who refuse to accept of his offer. But, why should he be *angry* with them? Why should he be in a *rage* with them? Why should he *quarrel* with them on that account?

We will now, if your Lordship pleases, come to the *resemblance* between the English and the American Governments. They are *both* called *governments*, to be sure; and so are kites and pheasants called *birds*; but, assuredly, though I pretend not to say which is the best, or which is the worst, they *resemble* each other no more than do these two descriptions of the feathered race. To substantiate this assertion, I shall take the material points, in the two cases, and state them in opposite columns, that the contrast may, at once, strike every eye.

#### ENGLISH GOVERNMENT.

A KING, having the sovereign power settled on his family by hereditary descent.—His heir may be an old man or woman, a boy or a girl.

The King's Civil List amounts to more than *four millions of Dollars* annually, or 1,000,000 of pounds sterling, besides the allowances to the Royal Children, Queen. &c. &c. amounting to nearly £400,000 more.

The King, *without the consent of any part of the Legislature*, makes treaties, and even treaties of *subsidy*, agreeing to pay money to foreign powers. He appoints ambassadors, public ministers, consuls, judges, and all other officers whatever.

The King can do *no wrong*. His person is *sacred* and *inviolable*.

The King can *declare war*, and make *peace*, without any body's consent.

#### AMERICAN GOVERNMENT.

The Chief Magistrate is a PRESIDENT, freely elected by the People every four years, and he must be 35 years of age.

The President receives a compensation for his services, which cannot be augmented during his presidency; and this compensation is 25,000 dollars, or 6,000 pounds sterling.

The President, with the *consent* of the Senate, who are elected by the people, can make *treaties*, provided *two thirds* of the Senators concur. With the *same consent* he appoints *ambassadors*, *public ministers*, *consuls*, *judges*, &c.

The President may be *impeached*, and when he is tried in Senate the Chief Justice is to preside. He can only be *dismissed* and *disqualified* by the Senate; but, besides that he may be afterwards for the same offence, *indicted*, *tried*, *judged*, and *punished*, according to law, like any other criminal.

The President cannot *declare war*. Nor can he and the Senate together do this. It is done by the *Congress*; and

## ENGLISH GOVERNMENT.

The King grants pensions to whom he chooses, under 6,000 dollars a year. He has more than 100,000 pounds a year placed at his disposal for *secret services*, of which no particular account is ever rendered even to the parliament.

The HOUSE OF PEERS hold their seats by *hereditary right*; but the King may make new peers whenever he chooses. They may be old or young; present or absent; abroad or at home.

The HOUSE OF COMMONS consists of County Members and City and Borough Members. Be the county great or small it sends 2 Members; and, as to the *cities and boroughs*, London and Westminster, which contain about 800,000 persons, send 6 Members, while Old Sarum, Gatton, and many other places, containing not a hundred persons each, send each 2 Members. The Members are elected for *seven years*.

The *qualification* for County Members £600 a year in land; and £300 a year in land for borough-members.

The *qualifications of votes* are too various to be half described. In counties the *freeholders* only vote, and these do not form a twentieth part of the payers of taxes. A house or a bit of freehold land worth 40 shillings a year gives a vote; while houses and lands to the amount of thousands a year, if retaining any of the feudal character, give no vote at all. But, the best account of this matter is to be found in the Petition, presented to the House of Commons, and received by that House, on the 6th of May, 1793. In that petition it is stated,

## Members.

“ That 30 Peers nominate .. 66  
influence .. 39

—  
105

“ That 71 Peers nominate .. 88  
influence .. 75

—  
163

## AMERICAN GOVERNMENT.

is an *Act*, passed by the representatives of the people.

The President can give no *pension*, nor, even with the consent of the Senate, make any grant whatever of the public money, not even to the amount of a dollar. Every thing of this sort is done by the *Congress*, comprising the whole of the representatives of the people.

The SENATE consists of two Members from each of the States in the Union. They are elected by the State Legislatures, who have been *elected by the people*. They serve for *four years*. The Constitution *positively forbids* the granting of any title of nobility. Every Senator is to be not under thirty years of age when elected, and is to be a resident in the State for which he is elected.

The HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES consists of Members from the several States, *in number proportioned to the population of the States*, according to actual enumeration. They are elected for *two years*.

The *qualifications for members* is merely that of having attained the age of 25 years, and having been 7 years a citizen of the United States.

As to the *qualification of voters*, it is simply that of having *paid taxes*, and being in a state to be *called on for taxes*. There are, in the different states, slight differences in the regulations as to voting; but, generally, and substantially, *the paying of taxes, small or great in amount, gives a right to vote*. Of course, as the President, Senate, and Representatives, are all chosen from this source, they are *all really the representatives of the people*. It is manifestly a government carried on by the people, through their delegates.

## ENGLISH GOVERNMENT.

|                              |     |
|------------------------------|-----|
| “ That 45 Commoners nominate | 61  |
| influence                    | 22  |
|                              | —   |
|                              | 83  |
| “ That 91 Commoners nominate | 82  |
| influence                    | 57  |
|                              | —   |
|                              | 139 |
|                              | —   |

## “ ABSTRACT.

## Members.

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| “ That 71 Peers and the Treasury,                  |     |
| return by nomination and influence                 | 170 |
| “ That 91 Commoners return by no-                  |     |
| mination and influence.....                        | 139 |
| “ Total Members, returned by pri-                  |     |
| “ vate patronage for England                       | 309 |
| “ and Wales, exclusive of the                      |     |
| “ forty-five for Scotland .....                    |     |
| “ That in this manner <i>a majority</i> of the     |     |
| “ entire House is chosen, and are enabled,         |     |
| “ being a majority, <i>to decide all questions</i> |     |
| “ in the name of the whole people of Eng-          |     |
| “ land and Scotland.”                              |     |

All the Ministers have seats in one or the other of the Houses, and a great number of their *secretaries* and *clerks* besides. In 1808, when an account of this matter was ordered to be printed by the House of Commons, there were 76 persons in that House, who received, amongst them, 178,994 pounds sterling a year of the public money. What was received, in this way by the Peers and their families I have no means of knowing. But, not only can Members of either House enjoy the profits of places, or of grants; they can receive appointments and grants *while they are members*. They frequently take part in voting money to themselves. But, there is this *safeguard*, that in some cases, at least, when a member receives a lucrative appointment, *he vacates his seat*, and must, if he continue a Member, *be re-elected!* It is, however, very rarely, that his “*constituents*” refuse to re-elect him! Oh! la belle chose!

The king can dissolve the Parliament whenever he *pleases*; and the Parliament has been dissolved at every change of ministry for some time past. He can also prorogue the Houses *at his pleasure*.

## AMERICAN GOVERNMENT.

No person holding an office under the government can be a Member of either House; and no one can be appointed to any place (during the time for which he was elected), if such place has been created during the time he was in the Legislature.

The President has no power to *dissolve* the Congress, or either of the Houses; nor to adjourn their meetings, unless they disagree upon the subject. Nor can he call them together at any but at periods fixed by law, except on extraordinary occasions.

## ENGLISH GOVERNMENT.

If the king disapproves of a Bill, he rejects it, at once, without assigning any reasons.

The king alone coins money, raises troops, and fits out navies.

The privilege of *habeas corpus* was suspended in England for several years, during Pitt's administration, when there was neither *rebellion* nor *invasion*.

It is treason to *compass the death of the king*; and this may be by *writing* or *talking*, and *indirectly* as well as *directly*. The crime of treason here is against the *king*: in America it is against the *United States*; that is to say against *the people*. By an act of this king's reign (to last 'till his death, and a year longer) it is declared to be *high treason* to endeavour to *over-awe the king, or either house of parliament, into a change of measures or counsels*; and, at one time, it was *high treason* to send to any person in the dominions of France, a bag of flour, a flicht of bacon, or a bushel of potatoes.

In England the *Church Establishment* receives in rents and *tythes* about an *eighth* part of the amount of the rental of the whole kingdom. All the Bishops, Deans, Prebends, and the greater part of the beneficed priests are appointed by the Crown. There are *test laws*, which shut out from political and civil privileges great numbers of the people; and men are frequently severely punished, put in *felon's jails*, and *fined*, and *pilloried* into the bargain, for *writing*, *printing*, or *publishing* their *opinions* about religion. The Bishops have seats in the House of Peers. Marriages are not legal unless sanctioned by the priests of the established church.

As to the liberty of *SPEECH* and of the *PRESS*, many acts have been passed to abridge both; but, particularly one on the 12th of July, 1799, which suppressed all *political societies*, and all societies for *debating* and *lecturing*; except under *licences* from the King's Justices of the peace, or police Magistrates. Even lodges of the poor *childish Freemasons* were

## AMERICAN GOVERNMENT.

If the President does not approve of a Bill, passed by the two Houses, he sends it back with his objections; but if two thirds of both Houses persevere, the Bill becomes a *Law*.

The Congress alone has power to *coin money*, to *raise troops*, to *build and equip ships*.

The privilege or writ of *habeas corpus* cannot be suspended, unless, when in cases of *rebellion* or *invasion*, the public safety may require it. America has lately been invaded in several parts, has had her towns burnt and plundered, her coast ravaged and devastated; and yet, the *habeas corpus* was not suspended.

*Treason* consists *only* in *levying war* against the *UNITED STATES*, or in *adhering to their enemies, giving them aid and comfort*.

“ *No law shall be made by Congress respecting an established religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.*” *No religious test is required of any man to qualify him for any office. Any man may publish what he pleases about religion.* *No tythes in America. Marriages are settled under the eye of the civil Magistrate, if the parties choose,*

*No law can be passed abridging the freedom of SPEECH or of the PRESS.*

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## ENGLISH GOVERNMENT.

compelled to have a licence to meet, and to be *registered*; and, even after this, the King's Justices might order any lodge to be *discontinued*; that is to say, broken up. The King's Justices, in case of disobedience of this law, might punish, at once, by a fine of £20, or three months imprisonment; or if the offenders were convicted on indictment, they were to be transported for seven years. Public-house keepers were to lose their licences if they permitted such meetings at their houses. Every place for lecturing, debating, or reading newspapers, where money shall be paid, is to be deemed a *disorderly house*, unless previously *licensed*. The King's Justices were authorized to take the licence from any publican; that is to say, to *put an end to his trade*, upon receiving *information*, that *seditious or immoral publications* were read in his house.—As to the PRESS, every *Printer* is, by the same act, compelled to give notice to the clerk of the King's Justices, that he keeps a press or presses for printing, and he is to receive a certificate of having given such notice. The Justice's clerk is to transmit a copy of the notice to the King's Secretary of State, in whose office the names and places of abode of all the printers, and the number of the presses, &c. &c. are all nicely *registered*. *Letter Founders* are to do the same; and, moreover, they are to keep an account of the types and printing presses *that they sell*, and are to produce them, whenever required, to *any Justice of the peace*.—Then, again, the name and place of abode of the printer must be printed on every paper, or book; and any one issuing forth, dispersing after published, any paper, or book, without the name and place of abode of the printer, to be punished by the forfeiture of £20.—The printer is compelled to keep a copy of every thing he prints; he is to write on it the *name and abode of the person who employed him to print it*, under the penalty of £20. Persons selling or handing about papers *may be seized* and carried before a justice to have it determined, whether they have been offending the law. Any justice may empower peace officers to search for presses and types *HE suspects* to be illegally used, and to seize them and the printed papers found.—As to *newspapers*, the Proprietors, Printers, and Publishers are all compelled

## ENGLISH GOVERNMENT.

to go to the Stamp-Office, and make an affidavit of their being such, and also of their place of abode. They are compelled to deposit one copy of each paper at the office; and this copy with their own affidavits is all that is called for in *proof* of their being all guilty of any *libel* found in the paper.

An act was passed on the 18th of December, 1795, making it *death* for any part of the people above 50 in number, to meet for the purpose of petitioning, unless *notice* and *authority* for holding such Meeting be given to and obtained from the *King's justices*. The penalty of DEATH, without benefit of Clergy, occurs no less than nine times in this act. This act, not to spin out its details, puts all political meetings wholly under the absolute authority of the Justices, Sheriffs, and other Officers; who can in some cases prevent their taking place at all; and, in all cases, *put an end to them at their sole discretion*.—First a written notice, signed by 7 householders of the place, is to be given of a meeting; this notice is to be conveyed to the clerk of the Justices. The Justices, thus apprized of the meeting, arrive. And, if they hear any body *propounding*, or maintaining, propositions for altering *any thing by law established*, except by the authority of King, Lords, and Commons, they may *order the offending parties into custody*." There needs no more. This is quite clear. It may be excellent; but it is impossible to find any thing like it in America.

According to the amount, ordered to be printed by the House of Commons in 1808, the following are a few of our Sinecure:—

Auditor of the Exchequer,

|                          |       |        |
|--------------------------|-------|--------|
| Lord Grenville           | ....  | £4,000 |
| Teller, Earl Camden      | ....  | 23,117 |
| Earl Bathurst            | ....  | 2,700  |
| Clerk of the Pells, Hon. |       |        |
| H. Addington             | ..... | 3,000  |
| Chamberlains, Hon. F.    |       |        |
| North                    | ..... | 1,755  |
| * — Montague Burgoyne    |       | 1,660  |

\* This Mr. BURGOYNE has just written a circular letter to his neighbours in Essex, calling upon them to spend their *last shilling*, if necessary, in a war against the Emperor of France, whom he calls every thing but an honest man.—N. B. Mr. Burgoyne has had this place for *more than 30 years!* Will he now give it up, seeing that money is so much wanted for this *just and necessary war*?

## AMERICAN GOVERNMENT.

No law can be passed to abridge the right of the people peaceably to assemble and to petition for a redress of grievances.

There are no sinecures in America.

## ENGLISH GOVERNMENT.

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| Master and Worker of Mint, Earl Bathurst ..   | 3,000     |
| Register of Admiralty and Prize Courts, Lord Arden .....  | 38,556    |
| It is stated that there are great <i>deductions</i> out of this; but it is not said <i>who</i> receives them. | — £77,788 |

This is not being very select. I could have easily selected much fewer places, or pensions, to have made the same amount.

Here I will not take our *fifty thousanders*, like the Duke of York's, but will take a few of the *small fry*, and especially the Anti-jacobin *authors*, or their descendants,

|                              |       |
|------------------------------|-------|
| Joseph Planta .....          | £.120 |
| Mrs. Burke, .....            | 1,200 |
| Sir Francis D'Ivernois ..... | 200   |
| Rd. Cumberland's children .. | 200   |
| Mrs. Mallet du Pan .....     | 200   |
| Rev. Herbert Marsh .....     | 514   |
| Wm. Gifford .....            | 329   |

The English Government collects from the people 7*l.* 16*s.* each a year, including the whole population, men, women, children, paupers, soldiers, sailors, convicts and prisoners of all sorts.

The King has state coaches, horse-guards, foot-guards, several palaces and parks at the public expence.

People kneel, and kiss the King's hand.

## AMERICAN GOVERNMENT.

The whole of the civil government of the United States, President, Congress, Ambassadors, Ministers, do not cost £70,000 a year.

There are no *Pensions*, except granted by Congress for actual and well-known services.

The American government collects from the people 12*s.* 6*d.* each, a year, in taxes, taking in the whole of the population.

The President has none of these.

Nobody ever kneels to the President or kisses his hand.

I could my Lord, proceed much further, were it necessary; but, from what we have seen, I think, it is plain, that there is no *likeness* whatever in the two governments. As to that of *France*, as it is now new-modled, it appears to me to resemble the American rather than ours. People in France vote for Members of the Legislature upon the principle of representation and taxation going hand in hand. There are no feudal titles or rights in France. The Peers are, in fact, no more than eminent citizens, having no great estates attached to their titles and seats. There is, and there is to be, no *established religion*. The two Chambers in France, like the Congress in America, are forbidden to pass any law respecting

a predominant Church. Religious opinions are to be free. There are to be no books, which may not be freely commented on and examined into. There is to be nothing so sacred that reason may not approach it. There are to be no *tythes* in France, consequently no *benefices* to bestow. This is a government certainly very much like that of America. Mr. Grattan observed that the French people had exchanged the paradise of the Bourbons for the "*eternal damnation* of a military despotism." May be so; but, they seem resolved not to have feudal titles and courts; monasteries and *tythes*; *gabelles*, *corvées* and game-laws. May be so; but, it has not been proved.

In conclusion, my Lord, give me leave

to suggest, that it would be as wise in us not to cry up our sort of government so much. If it be better than that of France, why want them to have one like it? Most of my neighbours are well enough content if they are but able to get good cropt themselves, without thinking much about those of other people. We are always calling the French our enemy, and representing their power as so dangerous to Europe; and, why should we, then, fret ourselves because they will not be happier than they are? It would certainly be wise to let them alone; for, by evincing such an everlasting anxiety about their *form of government*, I am afraid that we shall give rise to a suspicion, that it is their form of government, and not the ambition of their Chief, that we dread, and against which we are about to make war

I am, &c. &c.

W. COBBETT.

#### THE NEW ERA.

His Royal Highness the Prince Regent called the commencement of his reign a New Era. I think I may apply that term to the present crisis. The Emperor Napoleon, it is said, has taken the field; he has placed himself at the head of all those "perjured villains," who so "basely deserted" the Royal Bourbons for that "vile monster," their present chief. He has left the good city of Paris to protect itself, and has withdrawn the whole of the regular force, leaving the volunteers, or the national guard, as the French call them, to defend the metropolis of the empire; that very metropolis which the hiring press of this country declared Napoleon was afraid to enter in the day time, and which was defended against the *Royal legitimate Monarch*, by the "perjured horde who had united their crimes to those of the Usurper." I do not think our Ministers would choose to leave the good city of London to defend itself. I remember when that most obnoxious measure the Corn Bill was in progress through the Legislature, that it was the boast of the ministerial papers, how many thousands and tens of thousands of troops, of all sorts, were quartered in the immediate neighbourhood of our metropolis, to defend it against itself. The *Times* recorded the names of the regiments, with a sort of savage joy, as if it calculated on something which it had not ferocity sufficient

to express; and yet we boast of the *loyalty* of the whole nation, the *love* of the people for their present glorious government, and the *universal satisfaction* which prevails in all quarters. One would think that forty-two millions of pounds sterling, borrowed on one day, was something of a damper to this "*general content.*" But mind, reader, this nominal forty-two millions is, in fact, a much larger sum, for which the country will next year be called on to provide. It arises thus:—the subsidies, which the generous Lord Castlereagh has agreed we should pay to the Allied Kings, for the purpose of preserving "*social order*," and the "*legitimate rights of princes*," are to be sent, at our expence, to their respective headquarters, and to be there paid in hard cash, good sterling guineas; not the paper money, which alone is to be seen in this country, but good gold coin.—Now, in order to obtain this, the government agents are at work, in all directions, to buy up whatever coin they can meet with. The Market Price is, this day, Thursday the 15th of June, one pound eleven shillings and eight pence, in paper, for one pound one shilling in coin. Therefore, for every hundred pounds in coin, which we deliver to our glorious disinterested Allies, we pay the sum of one hundred and fifty eight pounds six shillings and eight pence in paper. Judge, then, reader, what is the *real* amount of the subsidies we grant to the Potentates of Europe, for fighting in defence of the rights of the privileged race: This is no joke: it is real serious earnest. But we have only began: our subsidies are not half granted yet. The King of Denmark says, that his troops cannot march one yard, until he receives a *subsidy*. The *Crown Prince of Sweden* says, that he must have an equivalent in money for the cession of Guadaloupe to the Bourbons. And, be it remembered, that the Bourbon soldiers, sent to take possession of that island, immediately on their landing produced each man the national tri-coloured cockade out of his knapsack, and declared for Napoleon, while it was supposed that he was still burried in his exile at Elba. Thus we paid to the *Crown Prince of Sweden* a large sum for transferring the Island of Guadaloupe to the Emperor Napoleon, to annihilate whom we are now going to pay all Eu-

rope, and even this very same Crown Prince of Sweden amongst the rest. Ferdinand the Fourth of the Two Sicilies, has been *kept* by us so long that it is an old story to talk of him. But now he will be rather more expensive, for we shall have to keep up a large British Army to support him in possession, besides paying his own army, and giving him a good round sum to set up royalty, as we gave our own Prince Regent at the commencement of his "*new era*." By the by, this sum, (£100,000) it appears by some very impertinent questions lately asked in Parliament, was not applied for the purpose for which it was granted; and his Royal Highness has again had occasion to apply to his faithful Commons for assistance, by whom no doubt it will be most cheerfully relieved. Besides Ferdinand the Fourth, we have the other Ferdinand the Seventh, of the same Royal stock. His army too, it seems cannot march till we find money. Indeed it is shrewdly suspected, that a sum of £800,000 was advanced by us to that *beloved monarch*, to enable him to fit out his late Cadiz expedition to South America; and, as usual, a sort of fatality attends all that we interfere with. The Times, states "that by the ship "Sarah Jane, arrived in 92 days, from "Buenos Ayres, we learn that the revolutionists have got possession of almost the "whole of Spanish America; that General "Orr has 40,000 troops well armed and "equipped; that Admiral Brown has 8 "sail of large frigates; and that the utmost anxiety prevailed for the arrival of "the expedition from old Spain, which, "as it would of course fall immediately "into the hands of the revolutionists, "would afford them an ample supply of "military stores of all sorts. The British "had embarked their property," &c. &c. But the most extraordinary passage in this piece of information is, that "the King "Ferdinand has expressed the utmost indignation against the province of Venezuela, for having afforded such facilities to *English commerce!*" Here is Royal gratitude with a vengeance. So we advance Ferdinand, the beloved, £800,000 to enable him to punish those of our friends in America, who are disposed to receive our merchandize! The newspapers of to-day state, that the two Chiefs of La Vendee, who have been equipped by England at an enormous ex-

pence, have been both killed, all their stores and arms (which loaded two frigates and three sloops of war) taken, and their whole rebel party dispersed in all directions!—The subsidies being duly received, and the preparations being made, it is now said that the march to Paris will take place immediately.—To be sure, it is allowed that there are upwards of 600,000 "Perjured Villains" on the frontiers, with the "Hellish Monster" at their head. But what can such a Legion of Devils do against the *Holy Louis*, surrounded as he is by Priests; with the good Cause of Legitimate Right on his side; all the population of France ready to rise and tear the "Perjured Villains" to pieces, and with 1,011,000 men to support him. What can the "Infamous Usurper" do against such a mighty army as this. He must of course be put down immediately, and the Royal Louis will be received with a delirium of joy by all his Liege Subjects. In order to ensure success, the Times declares "from a source of undoubted Authority," that the Emperor of Austria is about to bestow one of his Daughters, the sister of the "unfortunate Maria Louisa, on the Duke de Berri, nephew of the "Desired" Louis. One would have thought that the Times would have been rather cautious of adducing this as a proof of fidelity. If so, how does it happen that Napoleon is deserted. And if the Emperor Francis can desert one of his Sons in Law, what proof is there that he will not desert another. A short time will now shew us the result of all this. If it should happen that Napoleon should succeed in defending his kingdom against the prodigious force assembled to destroy him, the effects will be incalculable! Our glorious Ministers have raised the genius of the storm. It is impossible to tell how he is to be appeased. Peace and tranquility were in their reach; they preferred war with all its horrors. But the leisure of peace would have brought about reform, and that would not suit the present system. War and its enormous expenditure, is better suited to the way of thinking of the Prince Regent's Ministers. But it is a very fearful experiment, and may end fatally. If Napoleon can but resist the first onset; if he can only "hold his own," as the phrase is, he will stagger the Allies. But if he should gain any, even the smallest advantage; if he should

be able to recover the late territory of France, to the Rhine, and re-occupy Belgium, the mighty confederacy of Legitimate Monarchs will at once dissolve, fall to pieces, and, each one shifting for himself, the Emperor Napoleon, recovering his former preponderance, will put an end in a short time to the whole Grand Alliance, and “leave not a wreck behind!”

MR. COBBETT.—The analogy which you have so clearly shewn to exist between the present political state of France, and as she was in 1793, and the obvious resemblance at the two periods, of the designs of her threatened invaders, are not more striking than the enthusiasm which now animates, as it then animated, the bosom of every Frenchman. All the world has heard of the wonderful effects which this spirit produced. History will tell it to posterity, that it effected the discomfiture of the enemies of France, who had dared to invade her territory, and secured to her the unalienable right of choosing her own form of government. We live at a period not far distant from those great events, which ought to give us correct ideas respecting them. But as we are apt to lose the recollection of particular acts of heroism, it may be useful, at this important and interesting moment, to bring a few of them under review. If they should fail in opening the eyes of sovereigns, or their ministers, to the folly of waging war against opinions, they may have the effect, at least, of reviving our feelings of admiration and respect for a people who so patriotically combated for liberty; they may encourage us to hope that, although tyrants may unite to subjugate nations, and although the struggle may be long, reason and truth will ultimately triumph.

When the Duke of Brunswick advanced from Longway to Verdun, after issuing his famous proclamation, he expected that the soldiers of the latter place would surrender on his summons. “The garrison answered that they were ready to die at their posts. The enemy, however, appearing in great force, the magistrates determined to capitulate. *Beaurepaire*, the commandant, hastened from the ramparts, where he had been encouraging the soldiers, and endeavoured to persuade them to defend the town. Find-

ing his remonstrances ineffectual, he pulled a pistol from his pocket and shot himself. The volunteers would not suffer his body to be buried at Verdun, of which the Prussians were about to take possession, but carried it to St. Menehoud. The National Assembly decreed him the honours of the pantheon, and ordered the following inscription to be engraved on his tomb: *He chose to put himself to death, rather than capitulate with tyrants!*”

“A young man who had joined the army of the North, met with some disappointments, which induced him to quit the service without leave of absence. Upon his return home, the people flocked about his aged parent, to sympathise with him in the grief which he was supposed to feel for having given birth to a son who had basely deserted the standard of liberty. His father refused to see him, although he was an only son, and had been the pride of his old age. The children pointed at him in the streets, and his former companions avoided his company. His father at length disinherited him; and divided his property amongst the defenders of his country, set out for the army to supply his place. This veteran made the campaign of Flanders, and displayed the greatest heroism in a variety of engagements!”

“It is impossible to conceive the hardships to which the French were exposed: to use the language of Custine, “they were without coats, without blankets, without shoes, and without breeches. In the name of humanity,” says he, in a letter to the minister of war, “I conjure you to relieve them from their present painful state. It freezes very hard, and they have been seven nights under arms.” Notwithstanding this lamentable situation, not a murmur was to be heard. The army was composed of volunteers of all ranks and all ages. Male and female were equally proud to suffer in defence of liberty. Among the prisoners taken by the Prussians at Hockheim, was a French officer, who was next day delivered of a fine boy!”

“The heroism of one of the national guards deserves particular notice:—early in the engagement he lost one of his limbs, yet he refused to quit his post; and when told by the surgeon, on dressing his wound, that he would be maintained by the nation, he seemed insensible of his sufferings, and replied, with a firm tone of voice, “I have

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still another arm to serve my country, and am perfectly contented, provided France obtains her liberty."

"On an alarm that the rebels of the Vendée were about to make an attack upon St. Malo, and that an English fleet was expected in *Concale bay*, to second their efforts, twelve battalions were raised in haste from the sections of Paris, and dispatched to the menaced spot. The inhabitants of the communes in Normandy contiguous to the rebels, rose in a mass; and that step, together with the gallant behaviour of the people of Granville, repelled the assailants, without the assistance of those new levies. There were in them a number of young men, who had led idle, dissipated lives; and being insensible to the claims their country had on them in danger, refused to march; and two battalions, one of the section of the *Thuilleries*, the other of the *champs Elysées*, broke out in open rebellion, singing, *O, Richard, O, mon roi.* When intelligence was brought to the fathers of families in those sections, of the disgraceful conduct of their children, they ran to the bar of the convention, desiring a strict examination might be made into it; and if found to be such as was reported, they swore to go themselves, and expiate the crimes of their guilty offspring, by shedding their own blood, and resigning the offenders up to the vengeance of the law, and their insulted country."

The writer to whom I am indebted for the above instances of heroism, remarks:—"What is worthy of observation on this occasion is, the French, when expiring from loss of blood, consoled one another with the happy prospects the revolution held out to posterity, and expressed a satisfaction in losing their lives in so glorious a cause. Such of the wounded French as were taken proper care of, recovered in a very short time, whilst the wounds of the Austrians, under similar circumstances, were always difficult to be cured, and often proved fatal. The state of the mind had the greatest influence upon the body; the Austrians were goaded on to fight in a cause which they did not approve; the French, on the other hand, were enthusiasts for *liberty*. The former wept at the remembrance of their homes and families; the latter were proud to suffer in the cause of humanity, and enjoyed happiness even in death."

In 1792, France had *ten* kings coalesced against her; intestine divisions, and civil war lacerated her bosom; her Generals were traitors—her troops disorganized. In 1815, the league is equally formidable, and it may be admitted, to a certain extent, that France is disturbed by the royalists; but no political faction exists sufficiently powerful to disturb the government; the treason of his Generals by which the Emperor was exiled, is destroyed; and, the army, animated with the recollection of its former victories, and burning with ardour to wipe off the stain imprinted by the recent occupation of Paris, is much more formidable, and in a higher state of discipline than it was at any former period. If France in 1792, gave such signal proofs of patriotism, and, under so many disadvantages, successfully resisted all attempts to debase her, why may she not in 1815, influenced as she is by the principles of liberty, and so fortunately situated as to her means of attack and defence, be able to bring the present contest to the same glorious result?

Yours, &c.

ARISTIDES.

#### OPENING OF THE LEGISLATIVE SESSION.

##### CHAMBER OF REPRESENTATIVES.

*Sitting of June 5.*—At this sitting, nothing very interesting took place. On the 6th, the discussions were particularly animated.

M. DUPIN.—I have a proposal relative to the form of the oath. The French people have voted the acceptance of the additional act—let us obey that act which does not prejudice your right of ameliorating it in the forms and under the conditions that shall be prescribed. There is another reflection of a nature to assure the well-disposed, and to do way before hand all malignant interpretations. There is no question about the substance of the oath—no difficulty—obedience to the Constitution of the Empire, fidelity to the Chief—intimate and indissoluble union of the people with the Government—but in the proper and well understood interest of the Government itself, let us recognise that the oath to be good, binding, and in a word constitutional, ought to be taken, not in virtue of a decree, which should contain nothing but the unalterable will of the nation constitutionally expressed.

**M. DE GUEVEL.**—The last speaker is mistaken in point of fact. The form of the oath introduced in the decree of the 3d of June, is literally conformable with the dispositions of the *Senatus Consulte* of the 24th Floreal, year 11. The article prescribes the following form,—“I swear obedience to the Constitutions of the Empire, and fidelity to the Emperor.” The proposed reservation would be unconstitutional. The additional act has been accepted by the French people; it is sanctioned by the Assembly at the *Champ de Mai*: let us prove to the nation that we are disposed to support that act with all our efforts. I demand the order of the day.—(*Numerous applauses.*)

**M. ROY (of Paris).**—“I vote likewise for the order of the day; but I must frankly confess that if the question was to discuss the form of the oath, I would rather that there should be added to it a promise of fidelity to the nation, for the first duty of the Representatives of the nation is obedience to their orders. On the other hand, this legislative power is not now constituted as it was in the year 12; I see no analogy—the Senate, the Tribune, the Legislative Body, no longer exists.—(*Violent murmurs.*)

**M. DUMOLARD** called out loudly to be heard.

**M. BEDOC** was for the order of the day, observing, that nothing could hinder the two Chambers from employing themselves, in more tranquil times, in ameliorating the Constitution.

**M. DUMOLARD**—God forbid that in the National Tribune I should suppose any thing contrary to the rights and interests of the nation. The nation is above every thing with me. The Emperor exists for and by the nation. If it were necessary to choose between one and the other, my choice is not doubtful. In the present circumstances the nation must be saved with and through the Emperor (*great enthusiasm in the assembly*). Let us recollect that the enemy is on the frontiers, let us recollect the intrigues of England—the first duty of France is to repulse the enemy (*Applause*). We wish to march only with our invincible armies—we do not wish to isolate ourselves from them. When the insidious proclamations of Louis XVIII. attack the honour of the soldiers, and depict them as rebels—when it is attempted to separate

them from their Chief, it is our duty to declare that the army is the nation; that the brave men composing that army are but our advanced guard; that we think as they do. Pardon, colleagues, the warmth that animates my words; can one feel strongly without speaking strongly? I see the danger near—I see it as it is. It should be known we are all devoted to our Sovereign, and in an honourable manner I demand the Order of the Day.

**General SEBASTIANI**—I oppose the Order of the day. The question is too important to be got rid of so lightly. It deserves, on the contrary, a solemn decision, after a mature examination. When Europe, still uncertain, with her eyes upon us, is ready to divide itself, shall we call in question the legality of this oath? We have an army, which is not an army of Cossacks; it will preserve both our liberty and independence; I attest its honour and its courage. I move that the deliberation of the Chamber be in favour of the oath; I do not hesitate to take it individually.

**M. DUMOLARD**—I renounce my demand for the Order of the Day, and adhere to the General's proposal.

**M. BOULAY DE LA MEURTHE**—With respect to the oath of fidelity to the Emperor, certainly I take it most willingly, and I think in doing it I do an act eminently French—for the Emperor is in my eyes the first Representative of the nation, the legitimate and established head of the State, the first tie of the Union. Hence, when I swear to be faithful to him, I think I swear to be so to the nation itself. We must here speak freely, and tell the truth. There exist in France two parties—one which is national comprises the great mass of the people, stipulates for her independence, honour, and real interest—the other may be called the faction of the foreigner—Yes, Gentlemen, there exist Frenchmen vile enough to call in the English, Russians, Prussians, &c. The Bourbons are the heads of that faction; it is they, who, by help of foreign bayonets, would again impose upon us an humiliating yoke. We must speak out—speak out unanimously, for without doubt, and I am far from suspecting, the foreigner has no representatives here. For myself I consult only my conscience, and my duty; and to-morrow, in the presence of the Emperor and the two Chambers, that is, in

the presence of the nation, I declare, I will take with pleasure the oath of obedience to the Constitution of the Empire, and of fidelity to the Emperor? (General cries of "To the vote! to the vote!")

M. GOURLAC—The Member has spoken of the efforts of the foreigners to divide us; it might have been added, that in La Vendee the enemies of the interior employ all means to subdue the men of the revolution. I am for the oath (Fresh calls of "To the vote! to the vote!")

The President consults the Chamber, and the proposal for the oath is unanimously carried.

M. Gen. CARNOT—I move, that to add to the glory and to the enthusiasm of our armies, the Chamber decree that they deserved well of their country. They have avoided the shedding of blood, and their moderation has equalled their courage.

M. DUCHESNE—We are all of the same mind respecting the army. It has given proofs, and its glory is established. But in the present circumstance we ought to say only that we expect every thing from its courage. Since it has not yet been able to signalize itself afresh, I do not think that (*marked and general disapprobation.*)

M. REGNAULT DE ST. JEAN ANGELY—With all our attachment to the army, I must say that the declaration demanded by General Carnot, cannot emanate from a single branch of the Legislature. We are not definitively constituted; hence we have not even the legal character necessary to make it the object of a simple resolution. But if you cannot alone give this honourable testimony to your sons, to mine who forms part of that formidable barrier to foreign invasion, to those brave National Guards, raised on all sides, and in a number which it is not yet time to disclose to our enemies, it is to the whole nation to pay that sacred debt. I move, that acknowledging all the justice of our Colleague's proposal, the decision be adjourned till after the union of the three powers. The adjournment was pronounced.

PARIS, JUNE 8.—Yesterday, at four o'clock, his Majesty the Emperor went in state to the Palace of Representatives, to open the Session of the Legislature. The Peers went with an escort of honour to the Palace of Representatives, and took their seats to the right of the throne; the

Representatives took the benches in the centre. There was a bench for the Ministers and Council of State. His Majesty was received at the foot of the steps by the President and twenty-five Members of the Representative body. His Majesty stopt in the hall and received the President and Vice-Presidents, who were severally presented to him. He then entered the Assembly amidst the unanimous acclamations of all present, who received him standing. Having taken his place on the throne, surrounded by the Princes, Grand Dignitaries, Ministers, and Grand Eagles of the Legion of Honour, &c. : the Master of the Ceremonies received his Majesty's order to invite the Peers and Representatives to sit down. The President of the Representatives took his seat in a chair in the centre of the hall, having two ushers behind him. The names of the Peers were then called over, and each took the oath. A Secretary having called the name of the first alphabetically, pronounced the form of the oath.—"I swear obedience to the Constitutions of the Empire, and fidelity to the Emperor." The Peer, standing up and lifting up his hand, said, "I swear it." In like manner the Chamber of Representatives was called over alphabetically, and took the oath each, in the same terms. The appeal being thus gone through, the Emperor uncovered for a moment, then having re-covered his head he delivered the following speech :

*Messieurs of the Chamber of Peers and Messieurs of the Chamber of Representatives—*For the last three months existing circumstances and the confidence of the nation have invested me with unlimited authority. The present day will behold the fulfilment of the wish dearest to my heart. I now commence a Constitutional Monarchy.—Mortals are too weak to insure future events; it is solely the legal institutions which determine the destinies of nations. Monarchy is necessary to France, to guarantee the liberty, the independence, and the rights of the people—Our Constitution and laws are scattered; one of our most important occupations will be to collect them into a solid body, and to bring the whole within the reach of every mind. This work will recommend the present age to the gratitude of future generations. It is my wish that France should enjoy all possible liberty. I say possible, because

anarchy resolves itself into absolute Government. A formidable coalition of Kings threaten our independence; their armies are approaching our frontiers. The frigate *La Melpomenè* has been attacked and captured in the Mediterranean after a sanguinary action with an English ship of 74 guns. Blood has been shed in time of peace. Our enemies reckon on our internal divisions! They excite and foment a civil war. Assemblages have been formed, and communications are carried on with Ghent, in the same manner as with Coblenz in 1792. Legislative measures are, therefore, become indispensably necessary; and I place my confidence, without reserve, in your patriotism, your wisdom, and your attachment to my person. The Liberty of the Press is inherent in our present Constitution; nor can any change be made in it, without altering our whole political system; but it must be subject to legal restrictions, more especially in the present state of the nation. I therefore recommend this important matter to your serious consideration. My ministers will inform you of the situation of our affairs. The finances would be in a satisfactory state, except from the increase of expence which the present circumstances renders necessary; yet we might face every thing, if the receipts contained in the budget were all realizable within the year. It is to the means of arriving at this result that my minister of finance will direct your attention. It is possible that the first duty of a Prince may soon call me to the head of the sons of the nation, to fight for the country—the army and myself will do our duty.—You, Peers and Representatives, give to the nation an example of confidence, energy, and patriotism; and, like the senate of the great people of antiquity, swear to

die rather than survive the dishonour and degradation of France. The sacred cause of the country shall triumph!

This discourse was followed by cries of *Vive l'Empereur! Vive l'Imperatrice! Vive la Famille Imperiale! Vive la Patrie! Vive la Nation!*—The same acclamations, the same transports, followed his Majesty when passing through the crowd of Deputies, as he left the hall. The President re-conducted the Emperor at the head of the Deputation.

#### ON THE THREATEN'D INVASION OF FRANCE.

*Anno Domini 1815.*

Oft did NAPOLEON offer PEACE,  
And, when refus'd, for WAR prepare,  
Which serv'd his *glory* to increase,  
And left his foes *disgrace* to share;  
Again such offer he has made  
And still his foes refuse to treat.  
Swearing they'll once more FRANCE invade  
A Bourbon on her throne to seat:  
Thus, among nations, FRANCE alone  
Is call'd on to renounce her Chief;  
But great Napoleon fills her throne,  
And he's gone forth to her relief.  
His god-like presence will dismay  
A host of foes, where he appears;  
Like chaff he'll scatter them away,  
And they'll fall victims to their fears;  
Let then his foes retract in time  
Nor further dictate laws to *France*,  
Lest they are punish'd for their crime,  
And taught the grand *Carmagnol dance*.

ALFRED N.

*Temple, June 12th, 1815.*